DOCUMENT RESUME

ED 021 286 CG 002 493

By- Miller, C.D.; and others

MICRO-COUNSELING: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF PRE-PRACTICUM TRAINING IN COMMUNICATING TEST RESULTS.

American Personnel and Guidance Association, Washington, D.C.

Pub Date Apr 68

Note- 16p.; Speech given at the American Personnel and Guidance Assn., Detroit, Michigan, April, 1968.

EDRS Price MF-$0.25 HC-$0.72

Descriptors- *COUNSELOR TRAINING, *MICROCOUNSELING, MICROTEACHING, PRACTICUMS, *TEST INTERPRETATION, VIDEO TAPE RECORDINGS

Micro-counseling, based on micro-teaching principles, was used in a pre-practicum training program to teach specific objectives related to test interpretation. Based on judges' ratings, the experimental group in micro-counseling received significantly higher ratings than the control group which had conventional class presentations and discussion prior to interpreting the test. Client responses in the experimental and control groups were similar. Trainees in the experimental group responded very positively to the training program which gave them the opportunity to practice specific objectives and to obtain immediate feedback with videotape. (Author)

MICRO-COUNSELING: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF PRE-PRACTICUM TRAINING IN COMMUNICATING TEST RESULTS

C. Dean Miller, Weston H. Morrill, and Max R. Uhlemann

Colorado State University

U.S. DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION & WELFARE
OFFICE OF EDUCATION

THIS DOCUMENT HAS BEEN REPRODUCED EXACTLY AS RECEIVED FROM THE PERSON OR ORGANIZATION ORIGINATING IT. POINTS OF VIEW OR OPINIONS STATED DO NOT NECESSARILY REPRESENT OFFICIAL OFFICE OF EDUCATION POSITION OR POLICY.

CG 002 493
ED021286

Speech given at the American Personnel and Guidance Assn. Convention, Detroit, Michigan, April, 1968.

Abstract

Micro-counseling, based on micro-teaching principles, was used in a pre-practicum training program to teach specific objectives related to test interpretation. Based on judges' ratings, the experimental group in micro-counseling received significantly higher ratings than the control group which had conventional class presentations and discussion prior to interpreting the test. Client responses in the experimental and control groups were similar. Trainees in the experimental group responded very positively to the training program which gave them the opportunity to practice specific objectives and to obtain immediate feedback with videotape.

MICRO-COUNSELING: AN EXPERIMENTAL STUDY OF PRE-PRACTICUM TRAINING IN COMMUNICATING TEST RESULTS

C. Dean Miller, Weston H. Morrill, and Max R. Uhlemann

Colorado State University

The neophyte counselor often feels anxious because he is confronted with a situation which to him is ambiguous and unstructured. Miller and Oetting (1966) identified three problems which confronted counseling psychology graduate students at the beginning of their practicum. These were: 1) difficulty in getting the client involved and talking; 2) uncertainty as to what the counselor should try to do; and 3) a need for a considerable amount of feedback as to their initial efforts. This study was designed to provide pre-practicum training for beginning counselors to assist them in increasing client participation in the process of communicating test results and to provide evaluation of the extent to which certain objectives had been met. Videotaping and immediate playback following each practice session were used as part of the training procedure.

The micro-counseling project was developed to apply micro-teaching principles to counselor education. Micro-teaching is a scaled-down teaching encounter which focuses on specific aspects of the teaching act which can be identified, practiced, rated and evaluated in short periods of time prior to practice teaching (Allen, 1967). Micro-counseling, based on micro-teaching principles, concentrates on specific aspects of the more complex counseling interview prior to the integration of several skills in a regular practicum setting (Ivey, Normington, Miller, Morrill, & Haase, in press).

The purpose of this study was to use micro-counseling techniques to teach beginning counselors specific skills of test interpretation. The emphasis was on helping beginning counselors involve clients more fully in test interpretation and identifying specific objectives for the beginning counselor. Dressel and Matteson (1950) indicated that greater gains in self-understanding and degree of vocational certainty were made by counselees whose counselors elicited the greatest amount of client participation. Rogers (1954) also reported findings which provide support for greater client participation as an appropriate objective. He reported that the only group which showed a significant increase in self-knowledge was a group in which the interview was designed to encourage client participation.

The training focused on giving beginning counselors practice based on specific objectives in interpreting tests. The training program emphasized: 1) listening and responding to cues given by the client; 2) being brief and concise when talking about test related information; and 3) relating test information to the client's own experiences and understanding. These objectives were designed to increase the amount of client participation and to provide specific objectives for the beginning counselor.

Method

Subjects

The subjects were 20 education graduate students in a course on "Interest and Aptitude Measurement for Counselors." To control for differences in counseling experience and academic preparation, subjects in the experimental and control groups were matched on age, counseling experience, and midterm grades in the course. Individuals in each matched pair were randomly assigned to the experimental and control groups.

Training Procedures

Subjects in the experimental group worked in pairs and were presented with a written training manual. The manual described ways in which a counselor could identify and respond to client cues in order to increase client participation. Further, the manual emphasized brevity and conciseness in describing the purpose of the test, test scores, and in making comparisons. Finally, the manual described techniques to involve the student and encourage his participation in the interpretation of the test scores by relating test information to the client's own experiences and understanding.

Three five minute videotapes of positive and negative examples were presented to the trainees who were asked to evaluate the extent to which the counselor met the outlined objectives of the study. The tapes were designed to present clearly and concisely the counselor behaviors considered important in test interpretation. Tapes were stopped by the supervisor as needed for cueing, discussion, and training.

In addition to the above, the experimental subjects each role-played a five minute session which was recorded and played back immediately for evaluation and discussion. Following the completion of the training, each subject re-read the training manual and made preparation to interpret a test to a volunteer client. The actual test interview was recorded on videotape for research and additional training.

Subjects in the control group were not given any training beyond that received as a regular part of their course work. They were given as much time as they desired to prepare for the counseling interview which was recorded on videotape. The interviews for both groups ranged in length from eight minutes to one hour. Subjects in the experimental and control groups

were randomly assigned blocks of time for recording their interviews. All trainees were instructed not to discuss the training program with anyone until after completion of the study.

Clients were high school and junior high school pupils who were paid volunteers. Clients were randomly assigned to trainees. All clients completed identical batteries including tests, attitude scales, and rating scales.

Instrumentation and Data Gathering

Four instruments were used in this study: 1) Counselor Effectiveness Scale; 2) attitude scale measuring attitudes toward guidance tests and counseling; 3) knowledge of tests; and 4) rating scale for judges. The counselor effectiveness scale (Ivey, Miller, Morrill, & Normington, 1967) consists of 25 paired adjectives presented in a semantic differential format. The attitude scale consists of 54 statements presented in a Likert format. A knowledge test of eighteen multiple choice items was constructed to measure clients' understanding of the Kuder Preference Record, Vocational Form C. A rating scale was developed for use by judges in rating the videotapes of the counselors in the experimental and control groups. A brief technical report of the four instruments may be obtained by writing to the authors at the Micro-Counseling Project, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, Colorado (Technical Report Number I: Instrumentation and Data Gathering).

Pre and post measures were obtained from the clients on both their attitudes toward guidance tests and counseling, and their knowledge of the vocational interest test. These were obtained prior to the interview and immediately following the test interpretation session. The counselor effectiveness rating scale was administered to all clients immediately

following the interpretation of the test. Judges' ratings of the videotapes were obtained from two judges working independently several weeks after the completion of the study. The judges were shown the videotapes in a random order and without any identifying information other than a two-digit number to identify the sequence which was to be followed in rating the tapes.

Results

Two independent judges rated the videotape recordings of the counseling sessions of the experimental and control groups. Table 1 presents the results of the comparison between the experimental and control group ratings of the counseling interviews. The ratings of the experimental trainees' interviews were significantly higher than those of the controls.

Insert Table 1 about here

A comparison of client ratings of counselor effectiveness is presented in Table 2. Clients tended to rate the experimental group as more effective, however, the difference was not significant. There was greater variability in the effectiveness ratings of the control group than in the experimental group.

Insert Table 2 about here

Table 3 presents a comparison of the pre and post scores of both the experimental and control groups on the attitudes toward the value of tests instrument. Although both groups became more positive in their attitudes toward the value of tests, only the control group change was significant.

The experimental group change approached significance. A comparison of the change scores of the experimental and control groups indicated that there was not a significant difference between the groups based on change scores from pre- to post-test ($t = 1.50$).

Insert Table 3 about here

Both groups increased significantly on their knowledge of test scores. Table 4 presents a comparison of the pre and post means for both the experimental and control groups. A comparison of the difference between the experimental and control groups based on change scores from the pre-test and the post-test was not significant ($t = .50$).

Insert Table 4 about here

Discussion

The results of the study suggest that the micro-counseling training program provides a framework for teaching specific skills of test interpretation to beginning counselors. The ratings of the two judges provide evidence that specific skills related to test interpretation may be identified and acquired by the techniques employed in this study. This approach involves focusing on limited and specific aspects of counseling in a training or supervision format with the use of videotape to provide models of the counseling behavior under study as well as immediate feedback of the results of practice.

The response of the trainees in the experimental group to the training procedures was very positive. The opportunity to identify and practice

specific counseling techniques eliminated much of the ambiguity and anxiety associated with beginning counseling. Experienced counselors in the experimental group were also enthusiastic about the opportunity to practice and obtain the kind of feedback which is possible with videotape.

The study supports the micro-counseling approach of identifying specific counseling skills suggested by research and focusing training on these skills. Based on findings of other studies the following training format was designed. First, that the counselor should focus on the client and respond to cues from the client; second, his description of the test and his interpretation of the scores should be brief, concise, and meaningful to the client; and third, that this would achieve greater client participation and involvement in the test interpretation interview. The ratings of the judges did indicate that the training procedure resulted in interviews which were rated as being more effective according to the above criteria of: 1) responding to cues; 2) brief and meaningful descriptions; and 3) increasing client participation and involvement.

Findings based on data gathered from the clients indicate that control and experimental subjects were similar in their responses to the test interpretation sessions. In assessing the attitudes of clients toward the value of tests, the results were at first surprising in that the control group increased significantly in their attitude toward the value of tests, while the experimental group did not increase significantly. This means that the clients who were seen by the control counselors felt after their counseling that tests were more valuable than they had felt prior to their counseling. A possible explanation for these results might be related to the focus of the counseling interviews of the experimental and control groups. The training

procedure with the experimental groups focused on the importance of counseling the client rather than disseminating test information. The control subjects, without this specific training, tended to focus on the tests to a much greater degree and less on cues given by the client. It could be hypothesized that focusing on the client reinforced in the client the feeling that answers and decisions were within him, while less focus on the client and more focus on the tests may have reinforced the feeling that the tests would provide the answer to questions and decisions. The results of this study do not offer conclusive evidence, but indicate this as a possible area of further research and investigation.

The results of clients' ratings of counselors did not differ significantly. However, clients in the experimental group rated their counselors higher on overall effectiveness and there was less variability in their ratings. The clients in the experimental group tended to gain more on the test of knowledge than the clients in the control group although the difference between the two groups was not statistically significant. Thus, brief descriptions of test scores and tests resulted in slightly more gain in the knowledge of the test than longer and more detailed descriptions of test scores.

The small number of trainees and subjects and wide range of experience and formal training among the trainees pose a problem in generalizing and in interpreting the outcomes. Experienced counselors in both groups received higher ratings from both the judges and the clients. Even though it was not researched, experienced counselors in the experimental program viewed the training as being interesting, helpful and stimulating and asked to participate in future studies.

The results of this study offer evidence that a micro-counseling approach is effective in teaching specific counseling skills and behaviors. Micro-counseling can be described as a scaled-down teaching encounter designed to focus on specific aspects of counseling that can be identified, practiced, rated, and evaluated in short periods of time prior to actual practicum or counseling experience. This provides trainees with an opportunity of concentrating on specific skills before the more complex experience of full counseling interviews which require the integration of several skills in a regular counseling setting. Perhaps the most significant aspect of the micro-counseling approach is that it requires a considerable amount of activity and effort on the part of trainees and supervisors for a short period of time, and that some of the "mystique" of counseling can be identified and practiced.

References

Allen, D. W. (Ed.) Micro-teaching: A description. Stanford, California: Stanford Teacher Education Program, 1967.

Bixler, R. H., & Bixler, V. H. Test interpretation in vocational counseling. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1946, 6, 145-155.

Dressel, P. L., & Matteson, R. W. The effect of client participation in test interpretation. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1950, 10, 693-706.

Ivey, A. E., Miller, C. D., Morrill, W. H., & Normington, C. J. The counselor effectiveness scale. Unpublished mimeographed report, Colorado State University, 1967.

Ivey, A. E., Normington, C. J., Miller, C. D., Morrill, W. H., & Haase, R. F. Micro-counseling and attending behavior: An approach to pre-practicum counselor training. Journal of Counseling Psychology (separate monograph), in press.

Kamm, R. B., & Wrenn, C. G. Client acceptance of self-information in counseling. Educational and Psychological Measurement, 1950, 10, 32-42.

Miller, C. D., Morrill, W. H., & Uhlemann, M. R. Instrumentation and data gathering. Technical Report Number I, Micro-Counseling Project, Colorado State University, Fort Collins, 1968.

Miller, C. D., & Oetting, E. R. Students react to supervision. ACES Corner, Counselor Education and Supervision, 1966, 6, 73-74.

Rogers, L. B. A comparison of two kinds of test interpretation interview. Journal of Counseling Psychology, 1954, 1, 224-231.

TABLE 1

A Comparison Between Experimental and Control Trainees Based on Mean Judges' Ratings of Counseling Interviews

Groups	N	Mean	Standard Deviation	df	t
Experimental	10	36.65	4.37	19	4.363**
Control	10	27.40	8.10		

Note - The 19 df was obtained from two independent judges' ratings of ten matched pairs.

**$p < .01$

TABLE 2

A Comparison Between Experimental and Control Trainees
Based on Mean Counselor Effectiveness Ratings by Clients
(N = ten matched pairs)

Groups	Mean	Standard Deviation	t	(9df)
Experimental	155.3	7.38	.89	NS
Control	150.56	14.62		

TABLE 3

A Comparison of Change Within Experimental and Control Client Groups On Pre and Post Scores of Attitudes Toward the Value of Tests

Group	Mean		Standard Deviation		df	t
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Experimental	148.11	157.56	17.5	27.3	8	2.03NS
Control	144.86	163.86	23.2	22.5	6	3.35*

Note - The difference in the number of df reported in the four tables resulted from incomplete data due to clients' failure to follow directions.

*$p < .05$

TABLE 4

A Comparison of Change Within Experimental and Control Client Groups On Pre and Post Scores of Knowledge Test

Group	Mean		Standard Deviations		df	t (8df)
	Pre	Post	Pre	Post		
Experimental	10.33	12.00	2.00	3.00	8	4.78**
Control	10.55	11.77	2.06	1.48	8	2.68**

*$p < .05$
**$p < .01$